

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 06505 171040 Z

10

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 CCO-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 DPW-01 IO-12 AID-20 EUR-25 RSR-01

INRE-00 /128 W

----- 088795

O P 170825 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 269

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST PRIORITY

AMCONSUL DANANG PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY

USDEL JEC PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY WARSAW PRIORITY

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MILI MOPS CB VS

SUBJECT: REPORTED ARVN "INVASION" OF CAMBODIA

THE FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SAIGON INFO PHNOM PENH FROM

AMCONSUL CAN THO 16 APR 73 REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION

AND INFO. QUOTE:

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MILI, MOPS, CB, VS

SUBJECT: REPORTED ARVN "INVASION" OF CAMBODIA

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REFERENCE: CAN THO 0141, 0142, 0196, 0199

1. SEVERAL OF THE WIRE SERVICES REPORTED APRIL 15 AND 16 A CROSS BORDER " INVASION" OF CAMBODIA. THE INCURSION TOOK PLACE FROM TINH BIEN DISTRICT OF CHAU DOC PROVINCE TO KIRIVONG PROVINCE OF CAMBODIA.

2. THE FACTS DIFFER SUBSTANTIALLY FROM WIRE SERVICE REPORTING. MGEN NGHI, MR IV COMMANDER, TOLD A CONSULATE GENERAL OFFICER APRIL 7

HE WOULD SEND A SMALL FORCE TO BOLSTER THE MORALE OF THE BATTERED 15 TH FANK BRIGADE WHICH WAS THEN FALLING BACK FROM TUN LOAP TO THE EDGE OF THE VIETNAMESE- CAMBODIAN BORDER. HE DISPATCHED A RANGER BATTALION, MINUS ONE COMPANY, AND TWO ARMORED CAVALRY SQUADRONS TO TINH BIEN. THE SQUADRONS DEPLOYED NOTHING HEAVIER THAN ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS.

3. THIS SMALL ARVN FORCE WAS HELD ON THE VIETNAMESE SIDE OF THE BORDER FROM WHICH POINT IT CONDUCTED PATROLS AND LIGHT SCREENING FORAYS ACROSS THE FLAT FIELDS WHICH MAKE UP THE UNMARKED BORDER. IN ADDITION TO PROTECTING THE 15 TH FANK, NGHI' S FORCES WERE SENT TO SERVE WARNING ON THE NVA 1 ST DIVISION TROOPS NOW POSITIONED ON THE LAST HILL EAST OF O MOUNTAIN BEFORE THE BORDER THAT THEY SHOULD PROCEED NO FARTHER. ARVN HAS CONDUCTED NO GROUND ASSAULTS OF NVA OR KI POSITIONS NOR HAS IT BUILT OR OCCUPIED ANY POSITIONS WITHIN CAMBODIA. ARVN HAS GONE NO MORE THAN 1 TO 1.5 KILOMETERS ACROSS THE BORDER AT ANY TIME.

4. CONSULATE GENERAL OFFICERS VISITED TINH BIEN APRIL 16 AND OBSERVED THE " INVASION." A SQUADRON OF APC' S WAS STRUNG ACROSS THE FLAT FIELDS JUST INSIDE THE CAMBODIAN BORDER. OCCASIONALLY ONE APC WOULD MOVE TO THE BASE OF THE SMALL MOUNTAIN, FIRE MACHINE GUNS, AND RETIRE TO THE LINE. ARVN RANGERS WERE WASHING THEIR CLOTHES. FARMERS ON THE FLAT LAND PLOWED THEIR FIELDS, AND THE ROADSIDE MARKET CONDUCTED A BRISK LOCAL BUSINESS. OCCASIONAL 105 MM ROUNDS WERE FIRED FROM TINH BIEN IN THE DIRECTION OF O MOUNTAIN. THE NVA OR KI IN THE PRESENCE OF CONSULATE GENERAL OFFICERS FIRED SEVERAL MORTAR ROUNDS WHICH FELL JUST SHORT OF THE BORDER. SIMILAR MORTARING HAD CLAIMED THE LIVES OF SEVERAL CAMBODIAN REFUGEES ENCAMPED JUST WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE BORDER IN THE LAST TWO DAYS.

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5. COL. HOANG DUC NINH, COMMANDER OF THE 44 TH SPECIAL ZONE, TOLD CONSULATE GENERAL OFFICERS THAT HIS SMALL FORCE WOULD CEASE ALL OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA APRIL 16. THE APC' S WERE SEEN WITHDRAWING FROM CAMBODIAN TERRITORY SHORTLY BEFORE NOON AND WERE NO LONGER VISIBLY DEPLOYED IN THE AFTERNOON.

6. COMMENTS: IF THE WIRE SERVICES WISH TO FIND A POST- CEASEFIRE CROSS BORDER INVASION THEY WOULD BE ADVISED TO VISIT THE HONG NGU CAMPAIGN WHERE ELEMENTS OF FOUR NVA REGIMENTS HAVE ENTERED, FOUGHT, AND HELD GROUND FOR THE LAST THREE WEEKS. WHILE THE TINH BIEN AREA MAY BE QUIET FOR THE MOMENT, WE ESTIMATE ARVN MAY BE FORCED TO CONDUCT FURTHER SHALLOW AND DEFENSIVE PATROLS IN THE O MOUNTAIN AREA UNTIL SUCH TIME AS NVA UNITS SHOW NO FURTHER SIGNS OF AGGRESSIVE INTENTION.

BARNES UNQUOTE
BUNKER

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